

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1.9
Im 3 Hh
rs.

MAR 19 1937 ☆

U. S. Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Thursday, March 18, 1937

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "CHOOSING AN ELECTRIC IRON." Information from the Extension Service and the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

"The current is coming, hooray, hooray!" I should think that every farm woman who has seen the power line poles go up near her home would want to express her delight in some such extravagant way.

If she's among those to whom the dream of electric conveniences is now a reality, with the power connected to the house and the wiring finished, she is beginning to buy equipment. But the cost of bringing in the current, and of wiring the house, has taken a good bit of the family income. Careful consideration must be given to the question of which items shall be bought first.

Hardly anyone can get all the desirable electrical equipment at once. It must be bought a piece at a time, as funds permit. Perhaps that's a very good thing in the long run. It enables the family to take the time to learn about each type of equipment, the qualities that give good service, the cost, and how to operate and care for one's purchases after they come into the home.

So I have been talking with Dr. Louise Stanley of the Bureau of Home Economics, and Mary A. Rokahr, Home Management Specialist of the Extension Service, in order to glean a few practical points for those of my listeners who have current now or expect to have it very soon.

Suppose we talk today about one of the smallest, simplest, lower-priced electric tools which will give a maximum of satisfaction to its possessor. I mean the electric iron. A good, serviceable electric iron can be bought for between six and nine dollars. Even on a time-payment plan this cost is not greatly increased. Miss Rokahr and Dr. Stanley have both given me suggestions on choosing a good iron.

"The 100 watt iron is considered the most satisfactory for general use," they say. "Those of smaller voltage are useful for pressing. The 1000 watt iron requires more electricity while in operation, but it does not take so long to heat, and does not need to be on for so long a time to maintain the required temperature as does a 660 watt iron, for example.

"The weight of the iron is not an important factor. Electric irons for home use generally range in weight from three and one-half to six pounds. For ordinary household use, light weight irons with 1000 watt rating are convenient and easy to use, and give good results.

3/18/37

"The iron with a 25 square inch surface is most frequently found. Here's another point: The solé plate, as the bottom of the iron is called, should be perfectly smooth and should heat evenly. Test the iron you intend to buy on a piece of blotting paper, to make sure that it heats evenly. You may find that the point of the iron scorches the blotting paper when the back or "heel" barely presses. Or vice-versa. The surface should be true,- that is, touch the board at every point without greater variation than one-thirty-second of an inch.

"Speaking of heating evenly, a good heat control is important for convenience and safety. This usually consists of a movable pointer which can be set at the right heat for different kinds of fabrics, such as silks, wools, synthetic fabrics, or cotton and linen of different weights and different stiffness. Dr. Stanley says we need more study on the degree of dampness in these various fabrics for best results when we iron them. Also we need to know the most satisfactory temperatures for each kind of work. But the adjustable thermostatic control, as the indicator is called, is a help in this direction.

"Any electric iron should be well-balanced, so that it does not dig into the material being ironed. The handle should be of a size and shape that is comfortable to your hand. Of course it should be of heat resistant material, so that you do not need to use an iron holder, and it should be far enough away from the body of the iron to avoid burns. Insulation should prevent its heating higher than 120 degrees. In general, an iron is more convenient to use if it has tapering sides, beveled edges, and a narrow point for going around buttons and into gathers.

"Some of the newer irons have the cord attached directly to the iron, without a plug. This cuts down repairs to cords and plugs. Another innovation is an iron with the wire inserted in the side instead of at the heel. It seems unnecessary to say that iron cords should be of the best possible material, insulated with asbestos beneath the cotton fabric coverings. A rubber plug is good at the end of the cord which is attached to the service outlet. It can be easily taken hold of to detach from the current, without pulling on the cord.

"A word on the care of an electric iron: Keep it on a shelf near the ironing board, with your press cloths, paraffin and other ironing equipment. Cover it, or put it in a box as a protection from dust and rust when not in use. Do you always dust your iron with a clean cloth before you begin to use it? And rub off with oil or paraffin any starch or other material that may stick to it? Look at the bottom before you heat it. When it is hot, rubbing it with salt will clean it. Watch the cord for breaks. They can be temporarily repaired with bicycle tape. A metal piece on the broad end of the ironing board makes a good place to set the iron while at work. Be sure your board is the right height for you to work, steady, and placed in a good light.

"One final admonition: Train yourself, and every member of your household who uses an electric iron, to disconnect it promptly when through ironing. It should also be unplugged when one is temporarily called away from the board. Irons left attached while the housewife made a lengthy telephone call have been known to start fires."
